Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the first full paragraph on p. 2 of the specification with the following amended paragraph:

As disclosed in a co-pending application entitled *High Speed Channels Using Multiple Parallel Lower Speed Channels* ~~attorney docket 0679/13~~ having serial no. 09/962,056, switching of input data arriving at a relatively high data rate of, for example, 10 Gbps, may be accomplished. As illustrated in Fig. 1, a plurality of switching elements SE0-SE7 ~~which~~ may operate at a ~~much~~ lower data rate, for example 2.5 Gbps. By the use of a sequential or successive sprinkling technique for complete data packets, a high data rate may be maintained. Data packets arrive from a receiver 11 ~~which would have a communications processor coupled to it~~ on line 12 at 10 Gbps and via the variable FIFO memory ~~illustrated at~~ 13, FIFO being First In First Out memory. The receiver 11 may have a communications processor coupled to it. Data packets are routed to a sequential sprinkler engine (SPE) 14 and then distributed at the lower data rate to various switching elements SE0-SE7. In general, a variable FIFO memory is ~~required~~ beneficial where a sudden burst of input data may occur which would temporarily overwhelm an individual FIFO memory without a large scale buffer memory 18 (which it can be assumed has almost unlimited memory capacity since it is remote or off the same semiconductor chip as the high speed memory).

Please replace the second paragraph on p. 2 of the specification that continues onto p. 3 with the following amended paragraph:

Fig. 2 illustrates where some latency may occur; in other words, thee would not be a continuous serial transmission of the high speed data packets through to the switch elements. Thus the data packets 1, 2, 3 are indicated in a line of data being received. The first data packet is routed to the switching element 7. After this operation is started, [[.]] a short time later ~~is~~ , as indicated by the time lapse t_1 , data packet two is distributed by the sprinkler engine; and then data packet three at a later time [[..]] t_2. Some latency occurs which must be compensated for by some type of buffer apparatus.